

## If You Work For A Nonprofit Organization

About 95 percent of all workers are required by law to pay Social Security taxes. That wasn't true before 1984 when people who worked for nonprofit organizations did not pay into Social Security unless they specifically chose to take part in the program. But the law changed in January 1984 as part of a package of legislation designed to ensure the long-range financial stability of Social Security. **Since that time, all employees of nonprofit organizations are required to pay Social Security taxes.**

This factsheet explains some special rules about how to earn credits toward Social Security benefits that apply to employees of nonprofit religious, charitable, or educational organizations .

### Social Security And Medicare Taxes

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Generally, as an employee of a nonprofit organization, your earnings are subject to Social Security taxes if you are paid \$100 or more in a year. (People who work for profit-making organizations pay taxes on all their earnings, even if less than \$100.) But the Social Security tax rates you pay are the same as other workers. In 1997, you and your employer each pay 7.65 percent of your gross salary up to \$65,400. If you make more than that, you and your employer continue to pay the Medicare portion of the Social Security tax (1.45 percent each) on the rest of your earnings.

### If You Work For A Church Or Church-Run Organization

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Some religious groups oppose paying Social Security taxes. By law, they are permitted to choose not to participate in the Social Security program.

When a religious group doesn't participate, it doesn't withhold those taxes from your wages or pay the matching share of Social Security taxes like other employers.

If you work for a church, or church-run organization that doesn't pay into the Social Security program, you must pay Social Security taxes if your earnings are more than \$100 per year. In effect, you are treated as though you are self-employed for Social Security. The self-employment tax rate is 15.3 percent, although there are special tax credits you can take when you file your tax return. For more information about Social Security self-employment taxes, ask your Social Security office for a copy of the factsheet *If You're Self-Employed* (Publication No. 05-10022).

### Credits Needed For Benefits

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In 1997, you will receive one Social Security credit for each \$670 of earnings, up to a maximum of four credits per year. In future years, the amount of earnings needed for a credit will rise as average earnings levels rise. The number of credits you must have to be eligible for Social Security benefits depends on your age and the type of benefit you are eligible for. The next three sections explain this in more detail.

#### *Retirement Benefits*

In order to be eligible for Social Security retirement benefits, people born in 1929 or later need 40 credits. Those born before 1929 need less than 40 (39 if born in 1928, 38 if born in 1927, etc.).

However, if you work for a nonprofit organization whose Social Security coverage was mandated by law starting in 1984, you may be able to receive retirement benefits with fewer credits. If you were **both** 55 or older **and** an employee of the organization on

January 1, 1984, you will need the number of credits listed in the table below. (The credits must be earned after January 1, 1984. This special rule does not apply if you declined Social Security coverage when it was offered by your employer prior to January 1, 1984.)

Nonprofit Organization Employees 55 or Older	
Your Age On January 1, 1984	Credits You Need
55 or 56	20
57	16
58	12
59	8
60 or older	6

### *Disability Benefits*

The number of credits you need for disability benefits is the same as all other workers and depends on your age when you become disabled. No one needs more than 40 credits (10 years of work), but you may need fewer. Ask Social Security for a copy of the booklet *Disability Benefits* (Publication No. 05-10029) for more information about work credits needed for disability benefits.

### *Survivors Benefits*

Survivors benefits may be payable to the widow or widower and minor children of a worker who earned enough Social Security credits. The number of credits needed depends on the worker's age at the time of death. As few as six credits (one and a half years of work) are needed to pay benefits to the survivors of a worker age 28 or younger. The table in the next column gives examples of the work credits needed for survivors coverage of workers at other ages.

Work Credits Needed	
Age At Death	Credits
35	13
40	18
45	23
50	28
55	33

### For More Information

You can get recorded information about Social Security coverage 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays, by calling Social Security's toll-free number, **1-800-772-1213**. You can speak to a service representative between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on business days. Our lines are busiest early in the week and early in the month, so if your business can wait, it's best to call at other times. Whenever you call, have your Social Security number handy.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call our toll-free "TTY" number, 1-800-325-0778, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on business days.

You also can reach us on the Internet. Type <http://www.ssa.gov> to access Social Security information.

The Social Security Administration treats all calls confidentially—whether they're made to our toll-free numbers or to one of our local offices. We also want to ensure that you receive accurate and courteous service. That's why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some incoming and outgoing telephone calls.



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